

# PORT MACQUARIE STEINER SCHOOL

## 2.1 STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

<b>Drafted date:</b> 5 <sup>th</sup> March 2018	<b>By:</b> Melodie Ayriss	<b>Approved by Board date:</b> 21 <sup>st</sup> June 2018
<b>Reviewed date:</b> 20 <sup>th</sup> March 2018	<b>By:</b> Ruth Gallagher	<b>Next review due date:</b> March 2018
<b>Associated policies:</b>	1.1 PMQSS Student Enrolment Policy 9.7 PMQSS Privacy Policy	
<b>Associated Laws:</b>	<i>Education Act 1990</i> <i>Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection Act 1998)</i> <i>Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998</i> ACARA Data Standards Manual	

### INTENTION

To provide clear direction to staff, students and parents of the expectations of the School with regards to student attendance.

### INTRODUCTION

This policy aims to ensure that the *Education Act 1990* and the NESA requirements in relation to student attendance at primary schools are followed.

The School endeavours to instil in each student the value of participation and to promote optimal attendance as routine and rhythm are an integral part of the School day. Expectations of attendance and punctuality encourage a healthy respect for work and study.

It is expected that students will participate in all aspects of the School curriculum. Seasonal Festivals and School excursions are an important part of the Schools educational program, and in accordance with the values of the School, students are required to attend. The curriculum includes a variety of age appropriate local excursions. All children, including those who find excursions challenging are supported to be able to participate.

### LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

- Government legislation requires students between the ages of six (6) and seventeen (17) to be enrolled at a school (unless registered in a home Schooling program) and to attend school on each day that instruction is given.
- Parents or guardians are responsible for ensuring that their child/ren comply with these legal requirements. It is the responsibility of the School to support parents by monitoring student attendance and helping to address attendance issues when they arise.

### POLICY

**The following outlines the relevant responsibilities of the Head Teacher and Administration Staff of Port Macquarie Steiner School:**

- The Head Teacher is responsible for maintaining a Register of Enrolments on paper or in the School database.

## PORT MACQUARIE STEINER SCHOOL

### 2.1 STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

- The Class Teacher is responsible for monitoring the daily attendance and absence of each student in their class by taking a Daily Attendance Register for each class. Student absences are to be identified and recorded in line with the Minister's Codes by the Class Teacher or staff member responsible for the class roll. Signed notes or SMS messages explaining absences should be recorded in writing at this time. This is to be recorded using the Minister's codes, attached in the Resources section at the end of this policy.
- The Administration Officer is responsible for recording the Daily Attendance Register on paper or in the School database. On days where the Administration Officer is away, this is the responsibility of the Class Teacher.
- The Class Teachers and the Head Teacher are responsible for identifying vulnerable students and those at risk of disengagement from the School which can ultimately lead to unsatisfactory participation and attendance. Early intervention is focused on groups that are at higher risk of harm or disengagement from education, and aims to improve their resilience through effective and appropriate support.
- Where a student has an unsatisfactory record of attendance, the Head Teacher will notify parents or guardians in writing, and a Teacher and Parent Meeting Record will be kept in the student file. As part of this meeting, an Attendance Improvement Plan will be drafted by the Class Teacher which is to be implemented under the direction of the Class Teacher or Head Teacher and the parents or guardians of the student. Attendance issues and any actions taken will be recorded in the student file.
- Under the direction of the Head Teacher, the Administration Officer is to follow up unexplained absences with the student and/or their parent or guardian. A phone call will be made or an SMS message will be sent to the parents or guardians of students with an unexplained absence on the morning of the recorded absence within 25 minutes after class commences. This will be recorded in the phone log. If there is no response after three days, a reminder SMS or phone call will be sent/made to the parents or guardians. The Head Teacher will refer to the School's Child Protection Policy and Mandatory Reporter Guide to assess if a report is to be made to the relevant Government Authorities. If there is no response after seven days, the absence is to be recorded as unexplained.
- It is the responsibility of the Class Teachers to bring cases of poor attendance to the attention of the Head Teacher or their nominee to investigate. This may result in a parent or guardian meeting, details of which are to be recorded on a Teacher and Parent Meeting Record and transferred to the student file.
- Where a student is absent for a significant amount of time without appropriate explanation, or has had repeated unexplained absences, the Head Teacher will access the mandatory reporters section of the Keep Them Safe website [www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au](http://www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au) to determine whether a report is required.
- It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher with the assistance of the Administration

## PORT MACQUARIE STEINER SCHOOL

### 2.1 STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

Officer to maintain the Register of Enrolments for a minimum of 5 years before archiving.

- Retain the Register of Attendance for each student for a minimum of 7 years after the last entry was made in respect to the student.
- Where the parents of a student of compulsory school age seeks an exemption from attendance at school or an exemption from enrolment, the Head Teacher will process the application in accordance with the guidelines from NSW Department of Education.
- The Head Teacher may exercise the Minister's delegation under section 25 of the *Education Act 1990* in relation to granting and cancelling a certificate of exemption from being enrolled and attending school in certain prescribed circumstances. These being:
  - exceptional circumstances (including the health of the student where sick leave or alternative enrolment is not appropriate);
  - the child being prevented from attending School because of a direction under the *Public Health Act 2010*. (Note that in the case of an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease, the School is required to advise an unvaccinated student not to attend until advised to do so. The parent is not required to complete an application for exemption);
  - employment in the entertainment industry; or
  - participation in elite arts or elite sporting events.
- The Head Teacher will consider applications in accordance with the criteria in the guidelines from the NSW Department of Education and Communities. The Head Teacher may grant an exemption from school attendance for periods totaling up to 100 days in a 12 month period for any one student.

#### **The responsibilities of the parents or guardians are to:**

- Send a signed note explaining the student's absence. SMS messages explaining absences are acceptable and should be followed up by a signed note the next day the student is present. Signed notes are to be kept in the student file.
- Sign in or out at the office if their student is arriving late or leaving early.

#### **PROCEDURE(S)**

##### **1. Register of Enrolments**

The Head Teacher is responsible for maintaining the Register of Enrolments and collecting relevant information pertaining to each student. The ACARA Data Standards Manual is used to guide the collection of relevant information about the student.

The following information is collected through the Enrolment Application Form and entered into the School database:

## PORT MACQUARIE STEINER SCHOOL

### 2.1 STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

- Student's name, age and address
- Name and contact telephone of parents/guardians
- Date of enrolment and, where appropriate, the date of leaving the School and the student's destination
- For students older than six (6) years, previous School or pre-enrolment situation
- Where the destination of a student below seventeen (17) years of age is unknown, evidence that the Department of Education officer with home school liaison responsibilities has been notified of the following details:
  - Student's full name
  - Date of birth
  - Last known address
  - Last date of attendance
  - Parents' or guardians' names and contact details
  - An indication of possible destination
  - Other information that may assist officers to locate the student
  - Any known work health and safety risks associated with contacting the parents, carers or student

The Register of Enrolments is to be maintained for a minimum of 5 years before archiving. These records may be moved off site within this time for storage, prior to archiving.

### 2. Attendance Register

A Daily Attendance Register (roll) will be maintained by the Class Teacher or staff member responsible for the class roll and entered into the paper register or School database using the Attendance Register Codes that include:

- Daily attendance, that may be recorded by noting daily absences
- Absences
- Reason for absence
- Documentation to substantiate reason for absence

Daily Attendance Registers are to be taken to administration where absences are recorded daily on paper or into the School database. Student Absent Notes can be completed by the parents or guardians and submitted to the Administration Officer or Class Teacher. This information is to be retained for each student for a minimum of 7 years after the last entry was made in respect to the student. These records may be moved off site within this time for storage purposes.

Requests for extended leave must be made not less than 4 weeks before the anticipated date of departure in writing giving reasons for why such leave is requested and submitted to the Head Teacher (or their nominee). If the School decides that a place is unable to be reserved for your child and you wish to remove your child from the School, the re-entry of your child into the School will be subject to the School Enrolment Policy.

## PORT MACQUARIE STEINER SCHOOL

### 2.1 STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

#### 3. Request for an Exemption from Attendance

An Application for Exemption from Attendance at School Request Form is available from administration and can be completed and returned to the Head Teacher. Reasons for granting exemption from attendance at School include:

- exceptional circumstances (including the health of the student where sick leave or alternative enrolment is not appropriate);
- the child being prevented from attending School because of the Head Teacher's direction under the *Public Health Act 2010*. (Note that in the case of an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease, the School is required to advise an unvaccinated student not to attend until advised to do so. The parent is not required to complete an application for exemption);
- employment in the entertainment industry; or
- participation in elite arts or elite sporting events.

The Head Teacher may exercise the Minister's delegation under section 25 of the *Education Act 1990* in relation to granting and cancelling a certificate of exemption from being enrolled and attending school in these prescribed circumstances. All applications will be considered with procedural fairness. If the Head Teacher is considering refusing granting an exemption, the parents or guardians will be given an opportunity to respond in writing to the concerns before a final decision is made.

Parents and guardians are required to clearly demonstrate that an exemption is in their child's best interests in the short and long term.

The attendance register must indicate full day exemptions with the code 'M'.

The School will send applications for over 100 days in a year, to AISNSW for their consideration.

- Where this application is supported, the Head Teacher will provide the original exemption certificate to the parents or guardians
- Where this application is not supported, the Head Teacher will notify the parents in writing of the unsuccessful outcome in accordance with the format from the guidelines
- Copies of the application and exemption certificate or notification are kept on the student file. The Minister's delegation and copies of exemption certificates should be filed with the School's attendance records

#### 4. Extended Leave – Travel

Families planning to travel during school terms are required to complete an Application for Extended Leave – Travel Form. Requests for extended leave must be made not less than four (4) weeks before the anticipated date of departure in writing giving reasons for why such leave is requested and submitted to the Head Teacher (or their nominee). Students travelling during school terms are not to be exempt. If the Head Teacher accepts the reasons

## **PORT MACQUARIE STEINER SCHOOL**

### **2.1 STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY**

and leave is granted, the 'L' code should be used on the attendance register.

#### **RESOURCES**

Register of Enrolments  
Daily Attendance Register  
Teacher and Parent Meeting Record  
Enrolment Application Form  
Student Absent Note  
Attendance Register Codes  
ACARA Data Standards Manual  
Application for Exemption from Attendance at School Request Form  
Application for Extended Leave – Travel Form  
DEC Exemption from School – Procedures

#### **REVIEW**

This Policy will be reviewed annually.